

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OTTAWA 07813 292153Z
ACTION EUR-12

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FOR IEA USIA

EO 11652: N/A
TAGS : OGEN, CA
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION

REF: QUEBEC CITY 322

1. THE CANADIAN PRESS NATIONAL WIRE SERVICE PICKED UP THE ESSENTIAL FACTS FROM THE LE SOLEIL STORY. THE ESSENCE OF THE STORY WAS AS REPORTED RETEL, THAT CIA AGENTS MET ON TWO SEPARATE OCCASIONS WITH UNNAMED REPRESENTATIVES OF A MULTI NATIONAL CORPORATION IN AN EFFORT TO DISCUSS MEANS OF "DESTABILIZING" THE P.Q. GOVERNMENT IN QUEBEC CITY.

2. LATER CP TAKES ON THE SAME STORY EMPHASIZED THAT THE QUEBEC JUSTICE MINISTER AS WELL AS QUEBEC PREMIER LEVESQUE DENIED THE STORY. IN FACT, LEVESQUE WAS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT HE HAD TRIED TO DISCOURAGE LE SOLEIL FROM RUNNING IT: "PREMIER RENE LEVESQUE ON HEARING OF THE STORY, SAID HE HAD TRIED IN VAIN TO CONVINCE LE SOLEIL JOURNALISTS THAT THE AFFAIR WAS NOT SERIOUS". THE CP FOLLOW UP MENTIONED
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"OPPOSITION LEADER GERARD D. LEVESQUE'S CHARGE THAT THE STORY HAD BEEN PROVOKED BY MR BEDARD (THE QUEBEC MINISTER OF JUSTICE) HIMSELF. CP CARRIED THE EMBASSY AND CIA-WASHINGTON DENIALS.

3. THE CP FOLLOW UP STORY RAN IN THE SATURDAY OTTAWA JOURNAL AND THE NATIONALLY DISTRIBUTED TORONTO GLOBE AND

MAIL. THE OTTAWA JOURNAL HEADLINED THE STORY "ALLEGED CIA PLOT DENIED", WHILE THE GLOBE AND MAIL HEADLINE READ "STORY OF U.S. ANTI- P.Q. PLOT DENIED BY BEDARD, EMBASSY". BOTH PAPERS USED THE CP TAKE WHICH QUOTED THE U.S. EMBASSY SPOKESMAN SAYING "WITH REGARD TO ANY U.S. GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT, WE CAN ASSERT CATEGORICALLY THAT IT IS A BASELESS STORY. AS WE HAVE SAID MANY TIMES, THE U.S. GOVERNMENT CONDUCTS NO INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS IN CANADA .

4. THE SATURDAY OTTAWA CITIZEN RAN A COMBINED STORY FROM BOTH CP AND SOUTHAM NEWS SERVICE. AGAIN, THE U.S. EMBASSY ' SPOKESMAN QUOTE WAS CARRIED IN FULL UNDER THE HEADLINE "CIA, POLICE DENY PLOT TO OVERTHROW QUEBEC GOVERNMENT; RENE CLAIMS CONSPIRACY WASN'T SERIOUS".

5. FRIDAY EVENING NATIONAL TELEVISION NEWS CARRIED THE STORY, THOUGH IT WASN'T GIVEN GREAT PROMINENCE. THE CTV COVERAGE CONTAINED A STATEMENT FROM THE CIA IN WASHINGTON THAT THE AGENCY HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF ANY MEETINGS IN WHICH CIA AGENTS WERE PRESENT. NATIONAL RADIO CARRIED THE STORY GIVING PROMINENCE TO THE DENIALS.

6. UPI CANADA RAN THE STORY 'RATHER RELUCTANTLY'. UPI OTTAWA FURTHER TOLD EMBASSY OFFICER THAT UPI DID NOT PLACE MUCH STOCK IN THE ORIGINAL REPORT, AND ONLY CARRIED THE STORY AT ALL BECAUSE CP HAD PICKED IT UP.
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7. IN ESSENCE, ALTHOUGH THE CANADIAN MEDIA OUTSIDE QUEBEC PICKED UP THE LE SOLEIL STORY, NONE OF THE MEDIA SEEMED TO TAKE IT TERRIBLY SERIOUSLY, AND THE EMPHASIS WAS MORE ON THE DENIALS THAN ON THE ACTUAL CHARGES OF CIA INVOLVEMENT. THE CREDIBILITY OF THE EMBASSY AND CIA'S DENIALS WAS STRENGTHENED BY THE FACT THAT BOTH QUEBEC JUSTICE MINISTER BEDARD AND QUEBEC PREMIER LEVESQUE DISMISSED THE INITIAL REPORTS.

8. REPORT ON QUEBEC MEDIA SENT SEPTTEL.
ENDERS

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